

## 5.12 Aesthetic and Scenic Resources

Potential impacts on aesthetics and scenic resources arising from implementing Alternative Groups A through E and the No Action Alternative are discussed in this section. The potential impacts would arise mainly from visual intrusions on the natural landscape from expansion of existing buildings, construction of new facilities undertaken in support of the waste transport, treatment, storage, and disposal in the 200 Areas, and activities associated with the borrow pit at Area C. Existing aesthetic and scenic resources of the Hanford Site are described more fully in Section 4.8.10.

Most facilities are not visible to the public because of the size of the facilities, the size of the Hanford Site, the location of the facilities within the Hanford Site, the terrain and restricted access to the Site, and the distance between the viewer and the activity on the Site. The exception is the construction, operation, and eventual closures of the Area C borrow pits (see Figure 4.1 in Section 4).

The Area C borrow pit site is a large polygonal area located adjacent to and south of SR 240 and centered approximately at the intersection of Beloit Avenue and SR 240. This site is about 926 ha (2287 ac) in size and is located next to the Fitzner Eberhardt Arid Lands Ecology Reserve (ALE) but is not part of the Hanford Reach National Monument. The area was designated as conservation (mining) in the Record of Decision (ROD) (64 FR 61615) for the HCP EIS (DOE 1999). The operation of the borrow pit would not be visible from vehicles using SR 240 from the southwest until they are approximately three-quarters of the way past the site. The reason for this restriction in the viewshed<sup>(a)</sup> is the elevated terrain adjacent to SR 240, separating Area C from the road. Travelers coming from the northwest on SR 240 would notice the site sooner and would be able to observe the activities in passing. The pits themselves would be located a minimum of 152 m (500 ft) from SR 240. During the borrow site development, the bringing of utilities from the Hanford 200 West Area to the site would be noticeable by those traveling on SR 240. The Area C borrow pits would be within the northerly viewshed from Rattlesnake Mountain.

During the operation of the Area C borrow pits, a maximum of approximately 70 pits would be excavated, and 86 ha (213 ac) would be disturbed (Alternative Group B – Upper Bound waste volume). From the air and SR 240, the surface terrain will look pockmarked. During the 12 plus years of the site's operational life, stockpiles of sand, gravel, rock, and silt/loam would be located within 305 m (1000 ft) of SR 240. The individual borrow pits would be restored when their useful life ends. This restoration includes replacing excavated topsoil and re-seeding the area. After extraction of resources from the borrow pit area is complete, the site pit slopes would be re-graded and irregular terrain lines installed to blend the site with the surrounding terrain. No permanent adverse aesthetic or scenic impacts would be expected.

Fugitive dust associated with development and operation of the Area C borrow pits is a recognized, potential problem and, as a result, a program would be undertaken to keep fugitive dust controlled during site development and operation, even during off hours. The use of soil adhesives, the application of water, and the discontinuance of excavation and truck loading activities, when winds are excessive, are

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(a) Defined as the scenic resources that can be seen from a particular vantage point.

1 some of the control measures that would be employed. As a consequence, fugitive dust from the borrow  
2 pit area would not be expected to develop into an adverse aesthetic or scenic impact.

3  
4 Elk occupying the ALE site are sometimes seen from SR 240. Operation of the borrow pit might  
5 reduce the likelihood of sighting these animals near Area C, because they might migrate farther away  
6 from where they might be seen from the highway as a result of these activities.

7  
8 Travelers can see some site facilities in the 200 West Area on an 11-km (7-mi) segment of  
9 SR 240 south of the Yakima Barricade (near the junction of SR 240 and State Route 24). At the closest  
10 approach, facilities associated with waste-management activities are about 3 km (2 mi) distant. Facilities  
11 throughout the 200 areas are visible from elevated locations, such as Gable Mountain, Gable Butte, and  
12 Rattlesnake Mountain and, in the distance from atop the bluffs, east of the Columbia River. These  
13 locations are generally not points for public viewing because of their restricted access; however, they may  
14 be points of viewshed observation important to Native Americans.

### 15 16 **5.12.1 Alternative Group A**

17  
18 The potential for aesthetic impacts in Alternative Group A would be those associated with

- 19  
20 • use of the modified T Plant Complex
- 21 • construction of additional disposal trenches of a deeper and wider design
- 22 • construction of caps for disposal facilities would raise the surface about 1.7 m (5.5 ft) for 169 ha,  
23 (416 ac) Hanford Only, to 179 ha (439 ac) for the Upper Bound waste volumes
- 24 • from 69 ha to 73 ha (170.4 ac to 180.6 ac) in the Area C borrow pit would be temporarily disturbed  
25 for excavation of capping materials.

26  
27 The T Plant Complex is a facility that has been in place for about 50 years and is not considered in  
28 terms of aesthetic impacts. Trench construction and the capped trenches for LLW, MLLW, and ILAW  
29 would not likely be noticeable from points of public viewing.

### 30 31 **5.12.2 Alternative Group B**

32  
33 The potential for aesthetic impacts in Alternative Group B would be those associated with

- 34  
35 • construction of a new waste processing facility
- 36 • construction of additional disposal trenches of current design
- 37 • capping the LLW, MLLW, and ILAW trenches over an area ranging between 187 ha (462 ac) to  
38 210 ha (519 ac) for the Hanford Only waste volume to the Upper Bound waste volume
- 39 • from 77 to 86 ha (190 to 210 ac) would be temporarily disturbed for excavation of capping materials  
40 in the Area C borrow pit area.

41  
42 As in Alternative Group A, the T Plant Complex is a facility that has been in place for about 50 years  
43 and is not considered in terms of aesthetic impacts. The new waste processing facility would probably be  
44 noticeable from SR 240 as one more multi-story concrete monolith with a 30-m (100-ft) stack. Even if

seen, it is questionable that it would be distinguishable from the other industrial buildings in the 200 West Area. Trench construction and the capped trenches for LLW, MLLW, and ILAW would likely not be noticeable from points of public viewing. The potential for aesthetic or scenic impacts related to excavation operations at the borrow pit would be essentially the same as for Alternative Group A.

### **5.12.3 Alternative Group C**

The potential for aesthetic impacts in Alternative Group C would be those associated with

- use of the modified T Plant Complex
- capping disposal facilities over an area of 151 ha to 160 ha (373 ac to 395 ac) for the Hanford Only waste volume to the Upper Bound waste volume
- disturbing temporarily 62 ha to 66 ha (153 ac to 163 ac) for excavation of capping materials.

The T Plant Complex is a facility that has been in place for about 50 years and, as in Alternative Group A, is not considered in terms of aesthetic impacts. Trench construction and the capped LLBGs and LLW, MLLW and ILAW trenches would likely not be noticeable from points of public viewing. The potential for aesthetic or scenic impacts related to excavation operations at the borrow pit would be essentially the same as for Alternative Groups A and B.

### **5.12.4 Alternative Group D**

Alternative Group D contains three sub-alternative groupings that are dependent on the location of disposal. The potential for aesthetic impacts for all sub-alternatives are bounded in the numbers presented below. The potential for aesthetic impacts in Alternative Group D would be those associated with

- use of the modified T Plant Complex
- from 62 to 64 ha (153 to 158 ac) would be temporarily disturbed for excavation of capping materials capping the disposal facilities for 150 to 155 ha (370 to 383 ac) for the Hanford Only waste volume to the Upper Bound waste volume.

The T Plant Complex has been in place for about 50 years and, as in Alternative Group A, is not considered in terms of aesthetic impacts. Trench construction and the capped trenches for LLW, MLLW and ILAW would not likely be noticeable from points of public viewing. The potential for aesthetic or scenic impacts related to excavation operations at the borrow pit would be essentially the same as for Alternative Groups A through C.

### **5.12.5 Alternative Group E**

Alternative Group E contains three sub-alternative groupings that depend on the location of disposal. The potential for aesthetic impacts for all sub-alternatives are bounded in the numbers presented below. The potential for aesthetic impacts in Alternative Group E would be those associated with

- use of the modified T Plant Complex

- construction of caps for disposal facilities for an area of 150 ha to 155 ha (371 ac to 383 ac) for the Hanford Only and Upper Bound waste volumes
- from 62 ha to 64 ha (153 ac to 158 ac) would be temporarily disturbed for excavation of capping materials.

As in Alternative Groups A, C, and D, the T Plant Complex is a facility that has been in place for about 50 years and is not considered in terms of aesthetic impacts. Trench construction and the capped trenches for LLW, MLLW, and ILAW would likely not be noticeable from points of public viewing. The potential for aesthetic or scenic impacts related to excavation operations at the borrow pit would be essentially the same as for Alternative Group A.

#### **5.12.6 No Action Alternative**

The potential for aesthetic impacts in the No Action Alternative would be those associated with

- use of the T Plant Complex
- expansion of CWC
- construction of caps for disposal facilities for an area of 158 ha to 159 ha (389 ac to 393 ac) for the Hanford Only and Upper Bound waste volumes
- extraction of capping materials from the Area C borrow pit temporarily disturbing 14 ac (35 ac) for that purpose.

Trench construction and the capped MLLW trenches would not likely be noticeable from points of public viewing. ILAW would be disposed of in vaults. Although the expansion of the CWC buildings might be noticeable from SR 240, they are co-located with other buildings in the developed 200 West Area and would not likely be considered an adverse aesthetic impact. Trench construction and capped MLLW trenches would likely not be noticeable from points of public view, particularly SR 240.

The potential for aesthetic and scenic impacts related to excavation operations at the borrow pit would be substantially smaller than for any of the other alternative groups, as less than 20 percent of the volume of materials would be needed for MLLW trench capping.